



DISHRAGS

Punk rock began to emerge in Western Canada in 1976 with two groups: Dee Dee and the Dishrags from the rural outskirts of Victoria, and the Furies from Vancouver. The leaders of each group were interestingly related to each other; they were cousins. The two groups hosted what is considered the first real punk rock "gig" in Vancouver, at the Japanese Hall on July 30th, 1977.

Dee Dee and the Dishrags consisted of three fourteen and fifteen year old girls assuming the stage names Dale Powers (bass/vocals), Scout (drums/vocals), and Jade Blade (guitar/vocals). Their hometown presence was brief and miniscule, playing only two uncomfortable gigs in Victoria before moving to Vancouver, promptly dropping the "Dee Dee" from their name and becoming an essential factor in the rapid eruption of the 1978 punk rock scene.

In their mere three years of activity, the Dishrags outlived every first-wave punk group in Western Canada, opened for the Clash and the Ramones, released two 7" EPs over two distinct incarnations, and left behind a small archive of recorded material. They were Victoria's first, Vancouver's most prolific, and arguably North America's premiere all-women punk rock group.

In 2008, a unique collection of live tapes resurfaced containing clear soundboard recordings of the Dishrags, one from 1978 and another from 1979 opening for The Clash. Supreme Echo has now released an archival 12" LP & booklet entitled "Three" containing twenty songs (fourteen unreleased), recorded from 1978-79 by the original trio. A second 12" LP containing the quartet recordings from 1979-80 is to follow in late 2015.

This extensive interview features the original lineup, in which the three members recall their earliest attempts at becoming musicians, forming a band, migrating to Vancouver, and provides an insight into how their presence in the scene helped create a lasting legacy. Initial introduction by Jason Flower. Photo by Bob Stazicich. Interview and following introduction by Colin Griffiths.

Jill Hemy-Bain: guitar, vocals
Dale Luxford: bass, vocals
Scout Upex: drums, vocals

35 years vaporize in a blast of "Past is Past"—a killer anthem charting her decision to refute the looming abyss of boredom and the familiar.

These Dishrags were born of resistance to social entropy, that mundane passivity that inevitably drains the energy from a culture. Immersed in the galvanizing force of a raw and cryptic music, coupled with a robust independence and innate understanding that scared the crap out of their parochial Island

homeland, three young girls generated a fierce bond that endures to this day.

I had the good fortune to hail their arrival in Vancouver in 1977, as I too had migrated from Victoria the previous year, stumbling headfirst into a nascent music scene whose audience literally leapt onto the stage, forming myriad bands to unleash a core intelligence, nihilist freedom, and a knowing sneer. The Dishrags' insertion into a DIY culture was perfectly imperfect — blunt, surly, potent. Instantly fascinated, I glommed to their side to share what that was... and am still their number one fan!

MRR: So... I'm curious to hear a brief initial history of before you guys started playing as a band; how did you hook up with each other. You know, early days before it all turned into a music thing.

Dale: Well, we went to a tiny school, so we couldn't help but know each other. We'd all been in the same class since Grade three, or even Grade two...

MRR: Wow, so it's been a real sisterhood...

Dale: Yeah, and it was just a tiny rural school on the outskirts of Victoria.

MRR: What school?

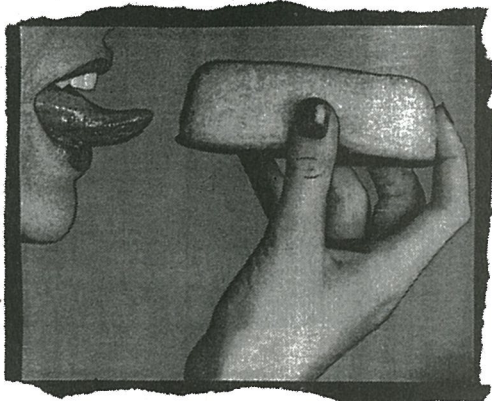
Dale: Keating Elementary.

MRR: Ah, right - at Keating Cross Roads. Yeah, they have a beautiful gravel pit out there.

Jade: Yeah, yeah, that was right by our High School. One of the things we had to do for

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gym class was run the gravel pit—the Pit Run.

Dale: Yeah, that's right - run around the Pit. We never did that.

MRR: Did you fall in?

Dale: Well no, we never did it because if you opted out of running the Pit you could choose Garbage Detail, which is what we would do.

MRR: Oh—so you guys were more into garbage than running?

Jade: Well, I recall us sitting and smoking by the side of the road instead...

Dale: instead of picking up the garbage...

MRR: So you must have been, what, about twelve then? By the time you started smoking?

Dale: uhm... maybe thirteen.

Jade: Grade eight, probably. Scout? Would you say thirteen? I think we've known each other since Grade ONE, really.

MRR: Amazing.

Jade: And Scout and my older sisters were good pals too. I think even before I got to know Scout—isn't that right, Scout? Like we sort of met through our sisters in a way, too?

Scout: I think our sisters got to know each other and then they said "oh, she's got a little sister," cause Jade was in the grade below us, and they lived nearby and we went to visit one day, yeah.

MRR: So you're the elder Dishrag?

Jade: No, Dale is...

MRR: So you're the baby of the group then.

Jade: Yeah... I am.

Scout: "Yeah... I ammm..."

Jade: So much younger.

had a rock band before that. Probably about a year—I'd say more of a... pop band.

Dale: We definitely had a band before we became a punk rock band.

MRR: So what was the name of that band?

...Long pause

Jade: We don't know. What did we call ourselves?

MRR: This is for the record. You are definitely hedging on the name...

Dale: We did play. We played a New Year's Eve party.

Jade: That's right. They passed the hat around. At my parents' house.

Dale: I think that was the only "gig" we played... and we would have been very very young.

Scout: That's still one of the worst New Year's parties I've ever been too.

Dale: I would have been fourteen.

Jade: I would have been thirteen...

Dale: We were very mature.

MRR: But you won't divulge the name?

long pause

Scout: No.

Jade: ...No

Dale: NO!

MRR: Oh, I see. I was just going for consensus...

Scout: There has to be some mystery...

Jade: One name that we thought of was kinda good, The Eddys—after Eddy Match Company? We were sort of the Eddys for a little while.

Dale: The Eddys, that's right...

Jade: We don't mind that name. Because we didn't really have a name because we didn't

MRR: Well, suck it up girls!

Dale: We're all within six to twelve months of each other...

MRR: So ok, so you got into the era of your teenhood—and then when did you actually encounter something that motivated you to play—like... get your hands on instruments?

Scout: Well, we did play music together but in a school setting; the district choir and the band at school. We did have music in common that way, so it was natural that we would form a band.

Jade: In band, Dale and I played flute and Scout played clarinet, so it wasn't.... well, we never did that when we got in the Dishrags, as you may have noticed! It was just that exposure to music—it wasn't as though it was a natural path for us into the band.

Scout: Yep, that's true.

MRR: When did you encounter the Ramones?

Dale: Well, we had a band before the Ramones.

Jade: Oh, absolutely—we

play anywhere other than my parents' house. We didn't really need one but we toyed around with a lot of different names.

MRR: Were you actually playing in the garage at your parents' place?

Dale: No, we were in the living room.

Jade: Yeah we played in the living room, but we also played in Scout's basement—that was our main practice spot, so we were never a literal garage band.

MRR: but a basement band... for credibility purposes.

Dale: We played in my basement for a while too... didn't we? I remember that.

Jade: Oh yeah, that's right!

Scout: Then my parents knew we were smoking and so they made us practice at yours—there wasn't parental supervision.

Dale: Yeah, but your place was a lot better because you guys always had the frozen pizzas in the freezer, whereas there was not a lot of food at my place. But there was always instant coffee, and never any parents around, so that was the attraction.

Scout: Yeah, I liked your place better!

MRR: Oh, that's excellent—no adult supervision. I like that.

Jade: Yeah, I always liked Dale's place.

MRR: Scout, how did you decide to play drums? What made you become a drummer?

Scout: Because we couldn't find a drummer.

Dale: Did we look?

Jade: I don't think so...

Scout: I didn't intend to; I didn't mind playing drums, but I didn't intend to play drums. I was going to be playing guitar too.

MRR: Did you draw straws or something?

Scout: No, do you remember, Jade? I don't know if we even tried anybody out but we advertised for a drummer, or something?

Jade: Not in Victoria.

Scout: Well, I'm kind of convinced that we did.

Jade: Yeah, this kinda rings a bell, 'cause Scout you started out on drums and I remember you wanted to switch to guitar and then we were gonna try to find a drummer. And we never did: So you switched back.

Scout: This is why we have to do interviews together, because...

Jade: Yes! But I'm pretty sure that before we actually even did a gig we went through this transition where Scout wanted to play guitar and we were going to get a drummer but nobody worked out.

Scout: Yeah, so I switched back to drums.

Dale: She just didn't even want to include anyone else!

Jade: Yeah well exactly!

Scout: It wasn't a hard decision!

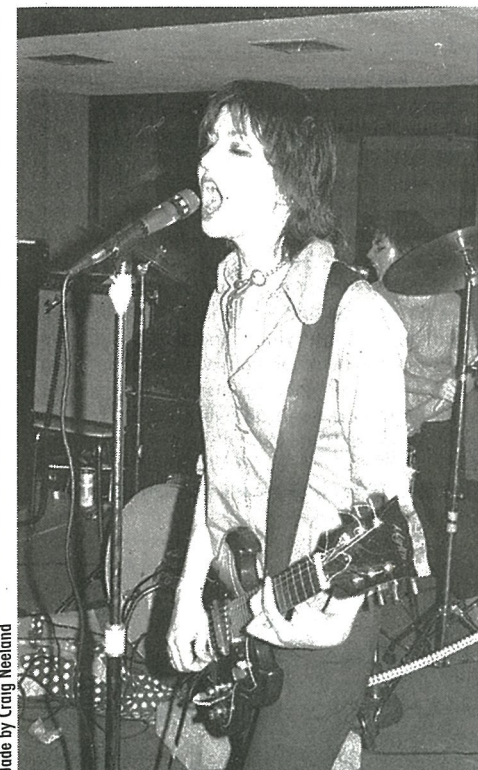
Jade: ...how could you fit in with us?!

MRR: God knows I try. Dale, you decided you were going to be the bass player?

Dale: Actually, I honestly don't remember how it was decided that I would play bass.

MRR: You came to Vancouver when you were fifteen the first time, right?

Jade: We played when we were fifteen, but we didn't move there until we were sixteen.



MRR: And Jade, did you buy an SG as your first guitar?

Jade: I bought an SG copy called a Marlin. Still have it too. I remember going back to the music store after I'd bought it and asking if they had a case for an SG? No—a case for an MG. And they said, "We don't know of a guitar called an MG..." And I'm like, "Um... maybe its another letter. You know, those other guitars with letters?" "You mean, an SG?" YEAH! That's it! It was really embarrassing...

MRR: Did you guys all have jobs around the same time to make money to buy your stuff?

Dale: Before we moved to Vancouver we all worked at a place called Oakland Fisheries, which is how we got a little cash in order to make the move.

MRR: So you were on the fish line?

Dale: We were on the fish line, yeah, and we would work the night shift and we would work from 8:00 at night until 6:00 in the morning, something like that, and then we would go to school the next day. And at that time I did have a car, so I was driving us all to work.

Jade: I just remember us doing that in the summer... I don't remember going to school.

Dale: We definitely did. Because we did two seasons there, we did the herring season.

Scout: We didn't do too many shifts before we quit—remember that party Colin had?

Jade: Yeah! We quit because you guys came to Victoria to record the Dayglo Abortions—you and Nick (Editor's note: Nick Jones / singer for Pointed Sticks).

Jade: And so we quit our job the same night because we wanted to come and party with you guys!

Jade: And so we said "we can't come in" and they said...

Dale: "...then don't come back!" We called in sick! All three of us called in sick!

MRR: That is my contribution to punk rock!

Jade: There we go! So there's a good Victoria connection. This was really early, this was before we moved.

MRR: So you got your instruments, you got your amps, you had jobs, you blew those off. I love the fact that you were on the fish line together... and you went right to school after work, right?

Dale: We did two different seasons there; we did herring season and the salmon. One of them was in the summertime but one of them would have been in the spring just before the end of school. That would have been the herring run, right?

Jade: Yeah, there were a few days when we went to school. We stopped at McDonalds and had breakfast—that was when McDonalds first started serving its breakfast—and then went straight to school.

MRR: You must have been so stinky.

Jade: As soon as we walked into McDonalds I remember the employees all kind of going "Ohhh..."

Dale: Us walking in the door, and them backing up. Away from the counter. And we're like ...what?

MRR: So you would gut the fish, behead them.

Jade: Pull out the roe.

Dale: The herring was for the roe—we tossed the fish basically in the garbage. The herring were caught just strictly for the roe.

Jade: The rest would go into feed, or something like that.

Dale: Fish fertilizer.

Jade: But the salmon gig was way better—it didn't smell. And that's the one we quit for you guys! You should be very flattered.

MRR: I'm totally flattered—'cause I LOVE my salmon. So now you've quit your jobs and you're

not finished school yet, right?

Dale: Well, that was summer time.

Jade: That was in summer, so we'd finished Grade eleven.

Dale: Well it seems to me that before the end of Grade eleven we had a pretty good idea that we weren't going back.

Scout: Yeah, I was just going to say that too. The last day of school, we knew we weren't going back; nobody else knew, but we knew.

Dale: Cause I can even remember talking to some teachers about plans for the next year and just shaking my head and going "You know... I won't put anything down here 'cause I'm never coming back."

MRR: So you all failed.

ALL: mmhmm. Yep.

MRR: And who here got their high school credit? Did you all get it eventually?

Scout: No, I didn't.

Jade: No.

MRR: Just for the record, Jade is now a doctor?

Jade: No, actually I didn't finish that either!

ALL: much laughter

Jade: I'm really good at dropping out... I have four years worth.

MRR: You did four years on your PhD?

Jade: Yeah.

MRR: So you've got, what—one more to go? If you were to crank it up?

Jade: I've got a thesis sitting in a drawer...

MRR: Oh, chronic. That's very reassuring. But you got your Masters in Art History.

Jade: mmhmm. PhD is not gonna happen.

MRR: Specialty in Florentine?

Jade: No, Italian Medieval. Romanesque and



painting. 13th Century, although I moved into the 14th Century for my PhD.

MRR: OK, so let me just backtrack here: that summer was the last summer for school - you all bailed—what happened in September? Had you come to Vancouver in the summer?

ALL: We moved in August.

Dale: We moved right into Bill's place, that we called the Cedar Palace (Editor's note: Bill Napier-Hemy / guitar player for Pointed Sticks). And the whole plan, the whole reason that we chose the date that we chose was because Bill said his parents were leaving to go to Europe for a month, so the plan was that the house would have no parents and we'd move right into the CPI. We got there, and we were partying... the parents left, we showed up at Bill's with a truckload of stuff, we were partying and that night around 11:00 the door opens and the parents came in and said their flight had been delayed! So we're like, "Whoa what now, there's parents here!"

MRR: And there's like three fifteen year-olds running around...

Dale: Yeah! And they were so cool—I remember the next morning getting up going “Oh, what’s going to happen... what’s going to happen?” and Bill’s mom Amy was in the kitchen making blueberry pancakes. It was just awesome, they never said a word. Never said a word to us about what we were doing there or anything. They were just so amazing.

Jade: We were used to thinking of parents in a rather different way.

Dale: Oh yeah, this is it! Whoa—the gigs up! We're busted. We're getting on the next ferry home, but no! They were just so cool; they didn't even ask us what we were doing there.

Jade: We didn't explain we were going to there for a while...

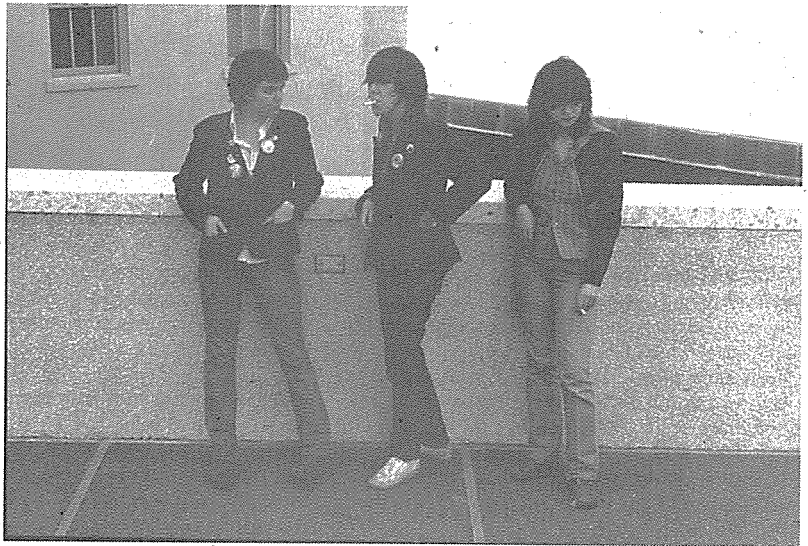
Dale: Maybe Bill did that sort of thing all the time!

ALL: much laughter

Dale: Só we moved into the CP. We were there and we stayed there until probably the day before they got home from Europe.

MRR: Right, so you were basically in Vancouver for that month. But had you already come to AV Manor prior?

(Editor's note: AV Manor was a giant house that Colin, Bill and Tim Ray had rented, and rehearsed there as the band known as



AV)

Jade: Oh yeah, we spent a zillion nights at AV Manor.

Dale: That was where we would come and spend the weekends.

MRR: That was the refuge.

Jade: We did a couple of gigs and I think ended up at AV Manor.

Dale: Lots of times. We were at quite a few parties at AV Manor. I can remember Tim Ray making oatmeal for us, and he set up a big table just like it was Thanksgiving and there were probably about fifteen people all sitting around the table, and Tim made this giant pot of oatmeal, but instead of cinnamon, he put in chili powder?

MRR: And Tim was working at the Keg, and he would come home with big black garbage bags full of salad that nobody had eaten.

Jade: Oh god, that reminds me of what we used to eat—anything.

MRR: And Bill and I and Tim invented this mung bean fried concoction we called Squonk, and we would eat that with the salad that Tim would bring in from the Kea.

Dale: I don't know how long after that I got the job at the Food Fair in Pacific Center and I would bring home cabbage rolls and tacos...

Jade: and there was ground beef that was about to go off?

Dale: and I would bring home ice cream buckets full of ground beef that they could no longer use for the tacos and the cores of the cabbages that were too small to make cabbage rolls, and we ate cabbage and ground beef.

Jade: We loved it.

Dale: We ate a lot of it.

Jade: We were so grateful that Dale had a job—we all would survive!

Dale: Yeah, they were all like... when's Dale getting off work?! We're hungry!

MRR: Yeah we'd be saying the same thing about Tim, "Ah, come on, it's gotta be closed by now... where is that guy?"

Jade: Scout and I would stay at home as I recall... Scout would watch game shows. Dale would

come home with raw food.

MRR: OK, here's a question: you guys had heard the Sex Pistols?

ALL: oh yeah - we were well versed in all that.

MRR: How did you get that information... in Victoria?

Jade: Creem Magazine, and Circus. You know, they'd have their little odd spots about what was going on in those days.

Dale: What was the record store that was downtown that we would go to? And we asked them to bring this stuff in—what was the name of that record store?

MRR: Richard's Records.

Dale: Yeah - we would go in and say just bring in punk. The first time, we went home with Blondie, the Stranglers, and the Ramones. And we said OK, but we want the Clash, and we want the Pistols, and all that stuff and we had to wait for it to come in.

Jade: But that first Ramones album I had got in Seattle. I drove down with my parents because it wasn't even available in Canada, so that very first Ramones album I remember we got separately and that sort of was something that had a big influence because of the three chord songs and stuff. Then after that we started ordering in the States and I think we got *Leave Home* along with the second Ramones album.

MRR: So you're actually responsible in a weird sort of way for bringing that material into the Victoria area.

Dale: Absolutely.

Scout: I hadn't thought of it that way but yeah, that's right.

MRR: That was a public service!

Dale: But we should mention the connection that was the whole reason we even got turned on to this was because long before we moved to Vancouver, we came over to see the Runaways. This was when we were in a band but we weren't a punk band yet.

Jade: We came to see the Runaways?

Dale: We came over to see the Runaways play with Alice Cooper.

Jade: Did we see them?

Dale: No - because it got cancelled! So we went over to Chris Arnett's, the Furies place.

Jade: That was what got everything rolling... so that was the summer when we were fifteen, then.

Jade: I was fourteen.

Dale: It was after the New Year's gig—after our first gig at your parents' place and then we came over to see, well, what are these all girl bands doing?

Jade: So at New Year's we were wearing satin pants... and kimonos, and then in the summer, all of a sudden it was OH! Let's get some jeans and tear them up and get some black clothes...

MRR: Just out of mere curiosity, with no attempt at blackmail whatsoever - do you have any photos of that?

Jade: oh, we do... Scout has some.

Dale: I have some too.

MRR: Scout, you remember all that?

Scout: oh yeah...

Jade: yeah - are you mad at us for saying this?

ALL: laughter

Scout: No - 'cause I have the pictures, so...

Dale: and Scout had the aviator sunglasses too - and you had that wild haircut...

Jade: It was an afro?

Dale: No, it wasn't an afro, it wasn't an afro

then, was it?

Scout: Yes, I remember, Dale.

ALL: much laughter

MRR: So then you went through a sea change once you had the material in your hot little hands?

Dale: That's right, it was like a light bulb went on. It was like, whoa, this is good, this is something we can really get our teeth into.

Jade: I should mention to that Chris is the reason I wanted to play guitar. He was sort of my role model.

MRR: Yeah, and he was your cousin, and the family thing.

Dale: And it was because of Chris that we even got the first show in Vancouver.

MRR: That was my next question—I knew that connection was there, but I'm not quite clear on the situation.

Jade: So that was the summer of '77 that we played, so when did we come over for the show then? It would have been even earlier.

Dale: It would have been about spring of that year.

Scout: I think it was pretty short notice.

Dale: It was—we went berserk and had about a month of every day after school practicing.

Jade: It was less than a month, even.

Scout: We didn't have a lot of material yet.

Dale: We played a lot of songs twice at that show.

MRR: Were they primarily Ramones songs?

Jade: Mostly Ramones, we also did...

Dale: Some Clash.

Scout: We did Eddy and the Hot Rods, we did Blondie.

Afterwards we go to a sick, sick, party where the Dishrags are harrassed for spraying some guy's Picasso Prints with shaving cream. We yell at him for a while and he goes back inside. The party is a dud, the Mexican food and too much beer are catching up on me so I climb into the van and fall asleep, waking up home again in beautiful Vancouver.

Jade: Saints? Did we do Saints by then?

Dale: Yeah.

Jade: Did we have some Chris Arnett songs then? No— he was playing his own stuff... It was very convenient when the Furies broke up, 'cause we could use their material!

Dale: It was mostly Ramones.

Jade: and Blondie; we did Rip Her To Shreds, and we did Gloria.

Dale: That's right, we did Gloria!

MRR: So you had about ten songs by that time...

Jade: Yeah, I think our set was like fifteen minutes!

Dale: I can remember as soon as we finished playing one song—do you remember what song it was, Scout? Someone walked up to the stage and said, "Play that one again!" So we said "Sure!" and we played it again! Twice in a row, we were like, "yeah!"

MRR: And what venue was this?

Dale: The Japanese Hall.

Jade: Vancouver's first punk show.

Dale: Canada's first punk show!

Jade: It was billed as Vancouver's first punk show; it said it on the poster!

Dale: And a lot of people came, it seemed to me the place was packed.

Jade: See, I remember it being pretty deserted!

Dale: Really? Because I thought it was packed! What do you think, Scout? The first show at the Japanese Hall—do you think it was full?

Scout: No, I don't think so.

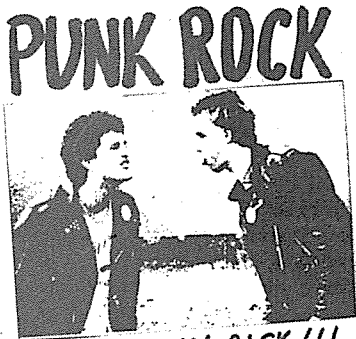
Jade: Yeah, I thought it was maybe 100 people gathered at the front, and

I remember seeing a big gap and seeing my parents standing at the back... hesitantly at the doorway.

Dale: For a quick escape!

Scout: There were a lot of looky-loos; just checking it out to see what the hell it was about. Not too many punks, right?

Dale: Cat Hammond, who was our manager, came up with the name of the band.



SICK! SICK! SICK!!!

FRI. MAY 12, 1978
DOMINION HALL
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8:00 P.M.

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STIFFS AND THE
DISHRAGS

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MRR: Oh, well this is interesting, so how did that work?

Dale: Because she had called us up about this show and we were like yeah yeah, we're gonna do it—and she kept calling us and saying "OK, well I need the name for the poster" and we still couldn't agree on a name... and she was like "well, I'm putting it out!" and she put out the poster with this name, and we're going "that's us?" Without any input from us at all!

MRR: She came up with the Dee Dee, as well?

Jade: Yep.

Dale: Dee Dee and the Dishrags!

Scout: I'll never forget the call, 'cause she phoned my house, and she said "Scout, I had to do the posters," and I said "Oh?", and she said "Yeah, so you're Dee Dee and the Dishrags" and I'm sure my jaw dropped... Right away I got on the phone with the girls and said, "Well, she's named us!"

MRR: How did Cat connect with you guys initially?

Jade: Through Chris. Everyone had a manager then, even though they didn't have gigs? So Cat was the Furies' manager, and so she was there at the practice space when we went there because of the cancelled Runaways show. We were there watching the Furies and we all started chatting and she said, "Oh, I hear you have a band?" We had Cat in Vancouver and then after we played that first show, we were trying to get shows in Victoria. We got one gig at Surfside Cabaret...

MRR: Oh my god!

Jade: Yeah, that was right after we played Vancouver. The audience, oh, they hated us.

Dale: Did we even finish our set?

Jade: I don't think so.

Dale: I think we had to leave the stage.

MRR: Were they throwing stuff?

Dale: They might have been...

Jade: I think they were booing.

Dale: They were definitely booing.

MRR: Were you upset by that?

Jade: No! No way—we loved it!

Dale: We thought they were just morons.

MRR: Did you play anywhere else during that period?

Dale: Yes, we played the Old Age Pensioners hall.

Jade: And the Dominion Hall—that was the one we did with DOA and AV, right?

Dale: and Rabid.

Jade: Were you in AV at that time?

MRR: I would have been.

Jade: At the Dominion Hall in Esquimalt, I think that was our next Victoria show, wasn't it? I think we did the OAP after we'd moved to Vancouver.

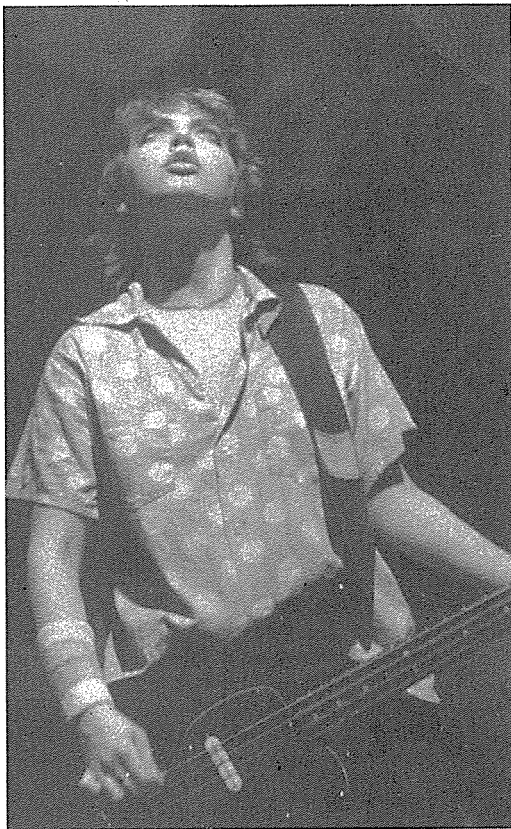
Dale: Oh, that's right, we went back. That was definitely before we moved over to Vancouver, because we were still in Grade 11.

Jade: That was when Joe came to the school, and we were throwing out pamphlets and stuff...

Dale: Yeah, that was fun—that's a really good story... 'cause we were in class, and they were coming over to do the soundcheck, and they found our school which was out in the middle of a potato field out in Central Saanich, and Joe and I think it was Randy came into the school and they were throwing open the doors of the classrooms and tossing in pamphlets and calling out, "Hey, where's the Dishrags? Where are the Dishrags?"

MRR: Wow!

Dale: Yeah, it was pretty wild—and no one called the cops. When we found out they were there, when we heard them, we just got up and



you remember that, Scout—is that right?
Scout: Yep!

MRR: It's nice that the collective memory spans three brains...

Jade: It's really only one brain!

MRR: So, by that time you've made the decision that you're staying...

Jade: Yeah, by the end of Grade eleven.

MRR: Was there a rupture in the family when you just said, well, goodbye? We're moving—and we're not going back to school... and we'll be in touch!

Dale: All three of us handled it quite differently. I had to leave a note...

MRR: Huh... and Scout, what about you? When you left for good, at that young impressionable age...

Scout: Well, my family... they were all very upset, but there wasn't much they could do about it, and they gradually got used to it. I remember that August going home for my birthday, so it couldn't have been that bad. My mom made me a cake in the shape of a drum, so...

Dale: Wow.

Scout: When they came over to Vancouver to go on through to Portland or wherever, they'd bring us stuff—I remember they brought us a little TV and they'd bring us pots and pans or whatever we needed. I think they thought I was going to come back home in September, which we obviously didn't do. They were not happy with it—they were really worried. They were worried about where we were living, and what we were getting into, and the people we were hanging out with.

Jade: I think all our families were pretty worried. When you think we were sixteen years old and leaving home and all of that. They were amazingly kind of tolerant, and I guess they all realized that, well, we can't really do much about this, so we'll just wait and see how it goes. But I do remember, Scout, your parents bringing us food too; we had a freezer full of salmon, which Scout wouldn't eat, and I didn't know how to cook and I remember putting a whole salmon in a frying pan and wondering: why isn't this thing cooking?

MRR: This is great, we've covered a lot of turf. What about your interest in Lou Reed at the time?

Jade: Yeah, that was another cover that we did... Chris Arnett, as you probably know, is a huge Velvet Underground fan, so even before the Ramones we were into Lou Reed and the Velvets and stuff, so it just kind of happened through that. Chris would always bring over albums and say "you should hear this" and certain things clicked.

MRR: But your number one influence was the Ramones, obviously.

Jade: Yeah, in terms of what we played, and the way we wrote songs. Short and sweet, and...

Dale: Easy to play, and fun, and...

Jade: They just had that rock and roll spirit. The Velvets were always kind of dark, but the Ramones were just, you know... Rock and Roll High School!

MRR: And how were duties doled out in terms of singing responsibilities? How did you decide on who was going to sing what song?

Jade: I think I started singing more just after I started songwriting, but before that I don't remember how we decided who would sing what covers... do you remember that, Scout?

Scout: Yeah, I think if we liked the song we'd say, "Hey, I wouldn't mind singing this one" and we had a lot of great material to pick from, so mostly we kind of decided what we liked.

Jade: Yeah, I don't remember it ever being a problem, just whatever, we didn't really care.

Dale: We'd go "You sang the last one, I'll sing the next one..."

MRR: And when did you first start songwriting?

Jade: Well, I remember in your basement—so that was before we went to Scout's basement—I remember we wrote "High Society Snob," so that was pretty early.

Dale: That was really early on... so that was the first song?

Jade: Unless we were just there writing—maybe we weren't practicing.

Dale: Maybe we were...

Jade: But that was the first song we wrote.

Dale: We were probably supposed to be doing homework...

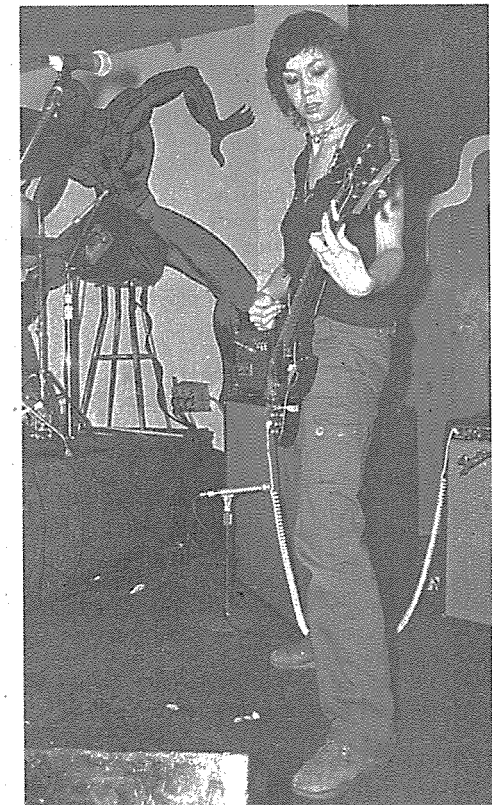
Jade: Well, in fact, we handed in the lyrics to that to my English professor! We got really good grades in creative writing! Some of it was lyric writing, and some of it was directly stolen from somewhere else... our teacher was a bit of a nut case—she really liked us!

Scout: We also handed in Ramones lyrics for our homework too...

ALL: much laughter

MRR: Let's talk about the Battle of the Bands at the Body Shop. You were just kind of added to the bill?

Jade: We warmed up for the Battle; they



walked out of the classroom, and left.

Jade: It was almost like a script from *Rock and Roll High School*!

Dale: Yep, and we got up and left, and no one phoned our parents!

Jade: We got up and left the school - I think they were just glad to see us go!

Scout: Mine would have been freaking out.

Jade: That was a great thing that they just had to let it happen—they probably would have been in shit too!

Scout: Yeah, just under the rug!

Jade: Yeah! You're right—just like hope that everything was just forgotten about...

Dale: Another funny thing that happened in Grade eleven was that the three of us were just walking down the hall one day, and the principal said "You three—in my office", and it was right after the Battle of the Bands in Vancouver. We're like, whoa, what now? We go in, and he's got the *Vancouver Sun* spread out on his table and there's a picture of Scout... and he said "is this you?" and we say "Yeah" and he says "Oh—that's kinda cool!"

Jade: He said it very proudly!

Dale: and we're like, "Oh! OK! Thanks! Great!" Yeah, and off we went!

Jade: Best ever visit to the Principal's office! And then DOA visited—he probably wasn't so proud!

Dale: Oh yeah! Not so proud...

MRR: At least he had the context for the mayhem! So you finally came over for good on your third visit to Vancouver?

Dale: No, we did a few shows before we moved over; we did the Battle of the Bands, we played a show with the Avengers, which was in a warehouse in Gastown. Those are the two shows I remember coming over for...

Jade: Yeah, I think that was it.

Dale: And those would have been in the Spring of '78, and then we moved over in the Summer...

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wouldn't let us be in the Battle!

MRR: Do you know why?

Jade: I don't think we were considered contenders.

Dale: I think April was the gig with the Avengers, and the Battle was after that.

MRR: So you basically overwintered...

Dale: Yes, that's right.

Jade: That was for a month.

MRR: And you were initially living at Bill's parents...

Dale: And then we got that place that was on Fourth Avenue; in that three-storey walkup—we only stayed there for a month.

Jade: That was horrible—you know, a rooming house full of drunks; that was really nasty, and then we moved to Cameo Manor. You know, it was really difficult to find anywhere that would rent to three teenage girls.

Dale: That was when the Windmill was going, 'cause it was so convenient to the Windmill. And how long were we there for? It seems like we were there for quite a while...

Jade: At least four months! Because we were still there when the Clash played, which was in January.

MRR: Let's talk about the Vancouver Complication recording sessions. Your songs were all recorded in the one day, right? You must have just showed up and blasted them out and that was that.

Jade: I think it must have been, it was very fast... you know what I remember most about that session? Was it Chris Cuttress or Jay Leslie; one of them had a White Spot credit card and they took us out for burgers afterwards, and that was like the highlight of the day, because, you know, we were hungry all the time!

Dale: Yeah I remember eating as well—I don't remember recording, I remember eating.

MRR: And how did you guys meet the Clash? I recall we all partied at the Windmill after their

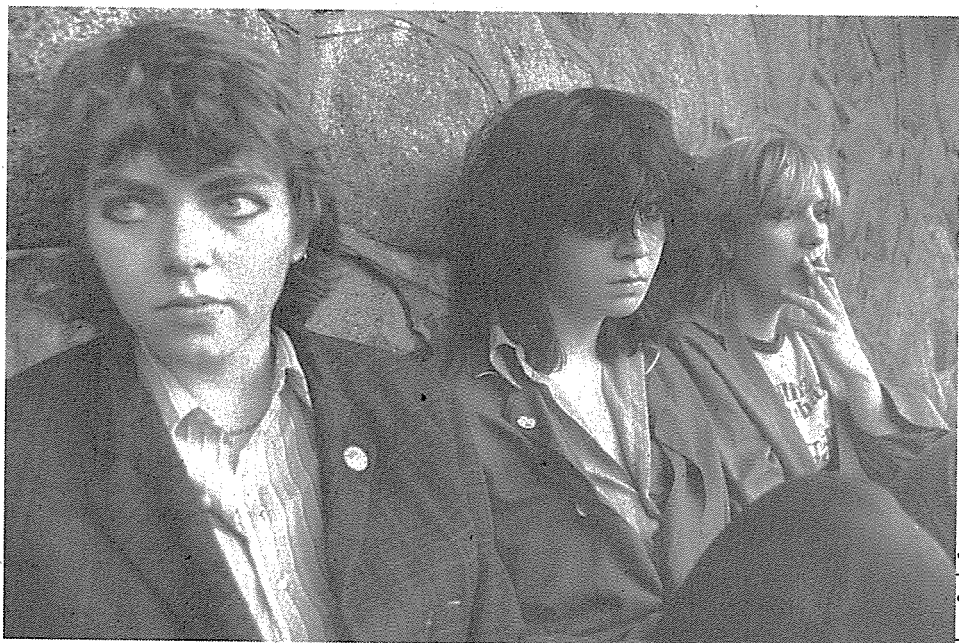


photo: Gayle Scott

gig... was that the first time you met them?

Dale: Yes, we met them then.

Jade: It was definitely the first time, we were so excited, and nervous!

Dale: I know we were sitting backstage and we were eating—remember they had those steaks... we were sitting there and Joe Strummer came over and said "Can I join you?" and I was like... "Do you have too? OH JEEZ!"

Jade: I remember being too nervous to eat! We had this great dinner and we were hungry all the time...

Dale: I think I stopped eating!

Jade: I remember my fork going like this... and I thought "oh I've got to stop eating".

MRR: Yeah—I'm missing my mouth...

Scout: No kidding... I remember racking my brains, thinking, "What do I say? What do I say?" Of course I didn't say anything... He must have thought we were pretty damn dull!

MRR: And then you backed them up on a couple of occasions, right?

Dale: Twice.

MRR: I remember the Paramount in Seattle—that was amazing.

Jade: Yeah, that was the second tour.

MRR: Did you go out on tour on the first one?

Jade: No, we just did the Commodore. They were getting women bands to open on the whole tour.

Scout: Is that the second one you're talking about, Jade?

Jade: No, the first one. I don't know how we got the second one. That was in Seattle, and we also had Seattle management.

Scout: Why not get a Seattle band?

Jade: Because we were better!

ALL: much laughter

Scout: Oh yeah, I forgot...!

Jade: And Seattle didn't have any girl bands.

MRR: Plus they already knew you, so there was probably prior knowledge on that. And that was separate from the Triangle Sound / "Past is Past" recordings with me and Harry Cool—that wasn't exactly the same time, was it?

Jade: No, I think we did the recordings first and the Paramount was later.

MRR: Yeah, and we all went down.

Jade: Yeah, we recorded for three days or so...

MRR: That's right. The sessions were really interesting. I wasn't quite sure why you asked me initially; I know I'd been doing some stuff out at Ocean Sound and we were all buddies, and I was really excited because I didn't know the studio and didn't know Harry, but we all got along so well.

Jade: Yeah, he was great.

Dale: And we had so much fun staying at their place.

MRR: And he had such a good time with the sensibility, and we were all friends anyway... The sessions were really articulate—the band really sounded like a band.

Jade: Well, I do think they were the best recordings we did.

MRR: Really?

Jade: Yeah—oh yeah; it captured us more than anything else, and I think that was at the point where we needed to be recorded, we were ready for it then and then things kind of disintegrated.

MRR: Yeah, the sessions were really straight up, and everybody was cool about it.

Jade: I remember the party afterwards. We were so proud of ourselves! That was really fun.

MRR: It was kind of a transformational moment - we had a lock on that material and that was truly great.

Jade: You know that Triangle was where Nirvana recorded?

MRR: I know, but we were there first!

Jade: We always liked Seattle. We loved the Vancouver scene, but Vancouver was kind of locked up with D.O.A. and the Subhumans and all those guys, but in Seattle they loved us because we were better than most of the Seattle bands... (chuckle). Here there was a real quality scene.

Dale: We really felt like we were really well

liked in Seattle—I always thought that was where our fans were, especially near the end...

Jade: We could sell some tickets there! We played Seattle and San Francisco—that was it with the three-piece.

MRR: Where did you play San Francisco?

Jade: Mabuhay, it was two nights, I think.

MRR: You were just there on your own?

Jade: Yeah, we were on our own - we actually flew down.

Dale: Yeah, we flew down and slept on Pink Section's floor...

Jade: Yeah, I guess we blew our budget on those tickets!

Dale: Brad Kent was already down there with the Avengers...

MRR: Right, he'd already taken off. And how did you hook up with Pink Section?

Jade: I think just because we were on the bill. Seattle we did numerous times—more than we played Vancouver.

Dale: Near the end we played more in Seattle than in Vancouver, without a doubt.

Colin: For *Past is Past*, do you know how big the edition was? Was it 1000 that got printed?

Dale: 500, I thought.

Scout: It was 500.

MRR: And you guys did that music video at that point...

Dale: We did the one for *Past is Past*.

MRR: And then in '79, you split, right, Dale?

Dale: Yes. Was it '79?

MRR: Yeah, and can we get into that? I'm just kind of curious—I don't know if it was a rupture or tectonic...

Jade: More like a disintegration than a rupture. It was just kind of gradual, wasn't it? I honestly don't remember... did you quit?

Dale: Yeah, I... I... I don't remember quitting.

Jade: Did we kick you out?

ALL: much laughter

Jade: This could be kind of painful, Colin!

Dale: What's your take on that, Scout?

Scout: Hmm... I think when Jade says disintegration, I think we were sensing that you weren't happy and it almost seems like we came to the conclusion that it wasn't working out so well... Does that sound about right?

Dale: Well, that's not the way I remember it...

MRR: I think that that was a moment in the trajectory of the band, and it didn't seem like it was so painful... it seemed like it was just something that occurred naturally.

Dale: It couldn't have been all that painful, really, because later I came to see the new four-piece version, and Jade and Bill and I shared a place together afterwards; obviously there was no major falling out.

Jade: I'm really fuzzy about it—I honestly don't really remember how that all happened.

Dale: The way I remember it—and I could be completely wrong—I recall we sat down to talk. We didn't really talk about where the band was going, but I remember sitting down to talk about stuff, and I remember just being kind of shocked... that I wasn't going to be in the band anymore, and I was just like "Oh! ...OK."

Jade: So you think we kicked you out!

Dale: That's the way I remember it...

Jade: Did we do that Scout?

Scout: Really?? huh...

MRR: It sounds kind of more or less a mutual agreement of some sort...

Scout: You weren't very happy though, right?

Dale: I wasn't very happy about not being in the band!

ALL: much laughter

Jade: I remember all of us getting pretty grumpy with each other for a while there, but it wasn't a personal thing.

Dale: I think we were a little bit disappointed, you know what I think maybe happened is that there was some disagreement about where we should be—does this ring a bell? Because of course we were so much more popular in Seattle and the thought that maybe we should even be in San Francisco, and I think that that could have been a problem because in Vancouver we obviously weren't going anywhere, and we were getting left behind... and I think some of us thought we needed to make a move in order for us to actually do anything with the band.

Scout: Yeah, that kind of does ring a bell... I'm hoping it's not me that didn't want to move! I don't remember! Because I should be kicking myself in the ass if I was! But this may be a bit of a link too, in that maybe it was just time that Jade and I went off to do some stuff with Kim and Sue, which was really great stuff, but that ended pretty shortly too. And we had a pretty intense relationship for many, many years, and maybe we just got to a place where it just wasn't happening the way we wanted originally. Does that sort of make sense?

Dale: It does—it does, yep.

MRR: It's so interesting because you guys are, to this day, still such a unit, because of the shared history and all the various crossovers with your husbands or whatever... and that's really, really, really rare. You don't run across that very often. There's this generosity of spirit in this situation, so I never really read it as... tragic.

Dale: It could well have been that they needed me out of the band, because I wasn't really a musician! You know, I wasn't contributing as a songwriter... if you're going to grow as a band you need musicians, and I wasn't, and I don't think there was any denying that. I do what I do, but very well!

Jade: Yeah, that's what I'm thinking now, is that at the time there was this idea about getting serious...

MRR: In terms of the songwriting itself, I'm always curious about what motivates the writing; "Love is Shit," for example!

ALL: chuckles

MRR: From a craft perspective...

Jade: I don't think there's any craft involved in that!

MRR: I'm trying to be nice here! But you know, the impulse to write; OK I'm going to write a song, and maybe I have a topic, or maybe there's something that's motivating me, or if it's even that personal, or maybe it's more objective, or somewhere in between... but in terms of we need the songs, so I'd better write something...

Dale: Well, I think that was a lot of it, I mean there was a pressure to be having our own

material...

Jade: We had to have original music... in terms of lyrics—I mean, we were sixteen at the time, so just keep that in mind, in terms of framing this, but also it was a reaction to pop music at that time. All the big radio hits were all love songs, and I think we were trying to do an anti-anything, so we had anti love songs, we had anti friendship songs, anti this and anti that, it was just this idea of kind of turning things on their head. It wasn't necessarily intended to be negative; it was just intended to counterpoint the popular trends at the time. It kind of snowballed from that; it just became kind of a habit of writing... you know, what can I rail against today!

Dale: Well, when I look at that footage of what's on YouTube now, that I'd never seen before, I don't know where we're playing, but man, we look angry!

Jade: But "Love is Shit" is actually a love song!

Dale: We're not smiling at anyone! We're not smiling between songs, we're angry...

Jade: We were anti friendly!

MRR: So you've played a few reunion gigs over the past few years now?

Dale: It was summer 2010 that we were in Japan.

Jade: I think that of all our reunion shows, that was the best one. We played five songs, and it was just really tight and really together.

MRR: And now? Do you have any gigs coming up?

Jade: It's way too hard for us to get together... but you know, if someone offers us a tour to somewhere far away and exotic and fun, we'll do it!



Colin Griffiths is a musician and artist who was deeply involved in the Vancouver music scene during the late '70s and early '80s. He played with numerous bands, including AV, Wasted Lives, UJ3RK5, and Buddy Selfish and His Saviours, and, as part of the early DIY ethos, also produced the first Subhumans release, *Death to the Sickoids*, the Dayglo Abortions first album *Out of the Womb* (with co-producer Nick Jones), the Modernettes' version of "Femme Fatale," and, with co-producer Harry Cool, the Dishrags' debut EP *Past is Past*.